



**Maryland  
Public Health  
Association**

Mission: To improve public health in Maryland through education and advocacy

Vision: Healthy Marylanders living in Healthy Communities

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## **SB0414 Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021**

Hearing Date: 1/28/21

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Position: SUPPORT**

Thank you, Chair Senator Pinsky, Vice-Chair Senator Kagan, fellow bill sponsors, Senators Augustine, Kelley, Hettleman, Ellis, Smith, Zucker, Patterson, Young, Hester, Feldman, Kramer, Lee, Rosapepe, Elfreth, Guzzone, Waldstreicher, Washington, Beidle, and Lam, and committee members. We submit this testimony on behalf of the Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) to express our SUPPORT for SB0414 – Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021. We appreciate this bill’s purpose to save lives with smart strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce environmental injustice, and protect workers. We view this bill as an important tool for all Marylanders.

As you know, climate change is an urgent public health threat. From extreme heat, flooding, air pollution, and more, climate change is impacting health across the state. Exposure to extreme heat contributes to heat-related illnesses and significantly increases the risk of hospitalization for asthma and heart attacks.<sup>1</sup> Exposure to elevated levels of air pollution, such as ozone and particulate pollution contributes to asthma attacks, cardiovascular disease and premature death.

Over the past year we have seen how interconnected the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, air pollution, and inequity are. A robust study by Harvard recently found that even a small increase in long-term particulate (PM2.5) exposure led to an 11% increase in the COVID-19 death rate.<sup>2</sup> The burning of fossil fuels is one of the biggest contributors to deadly air pollution, such as particle pollution.

Communities of color and low-income communities bear a disproportionate burden from fossil fuel pollution. The environmental justice and health equity components of this bill are critical to ensuring that everyone benefits from a transition to a clean energy future, especially those overburdened by fossil fuel pollution.

What the pandemic has shown us is that we must treat COVID-19, climate change, and health inequities in tandem. The Climate Solutions Now Act is a step in the right direction. It will save lives and improve health by reducing air pollution from fossil fuels and by reducing greenhouse gas emissions that worsen climate change. Please support this bill.

*The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization of public health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of all Marylanders through education and advocacy in support of healthy Marylanders living in healthy communities. MdPHA is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association, a nearly 145-year-old professional organization dedicated to improving population health and reducing the health disparities that plague our state and our nation.*

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<sup>1</sup><https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Marylander/Documents/MCCC/Publications/Reports/MarylandClimateandHealthProfileReport.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Wu X, Nethery RC, Sabath MB, Braun D, Dominici F. Air pollution and COVID-19 mortality in the United States: Strengths and limitations of an ecological regression analysis. *Science Advances*. 2020;6(45).

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